

Soorp Krikor Loossavorich (Saint Gregory The Illuminator)

When Dertad, the King of Armenia, asked Krikor to offer flowers to the statue of the goddess Anahid, Krikor refused saying that he was Christian and worshipped God, not statues.

Dertad, who was pagan, was angered and ordered Krikor tortured and thrown in a dungeon called *khor virab*.

Many years later King Dertad, overcome by remorse for his deeds, became very ill. The King's sister had a dream in which only Krikor could save the King, so Krikor was brought out from the dungeon where he had miraculously stayed alive for fourteen years. He cured the King and, in return, was permitted to teach Christianity to the Armenian people.

Krikor baptized the King and his family and the whole nation became Christian. In 301 A.D. Armenia became the first Christian country in the world.

Soorp Krikor, who spread the light of Christianity in Armenia through his sermons, was called *loossavorich* (illuminator).

Krikor Loossavorich, the patron saint of Armenia, is celebrated on June 9th.



Soorp Hagop Medzpena (Saint James of Mdzbin)

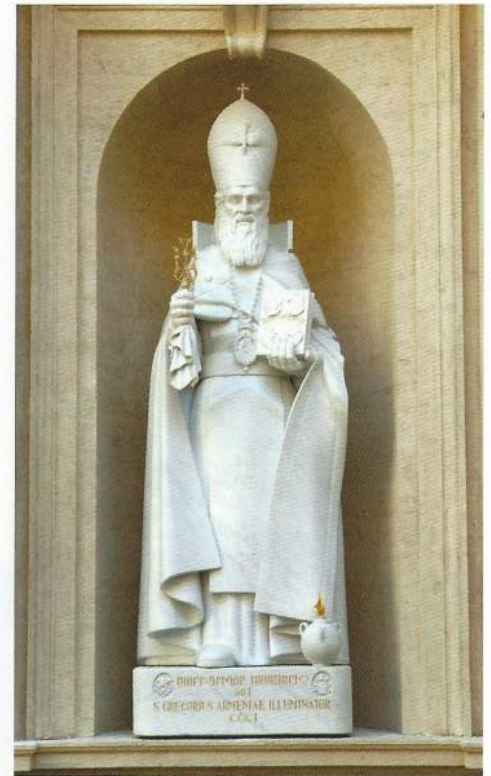
It is said that Hagop, despite his old age, wanted to climb Mount Ararat to find Noah's Ark.

Every morning he would climb, but after a night's sleep he would once again find himself at the bottom of the mountain.

He never gave up. He kept on trying.

One night an angel came to Hagop in his sleep and gave him a piece of Noah's Ark to reward him for his perseverance.

Soorp Hagop is celebrated in mid-December.



Saint Gregory the Illuminator monument located at St. Peter's Basilica, in Vatican City, Rome.

Photo by: Hrair Hawk Khatcherian